

grants. Strong local leadership transform these centers into places many older citizens now depend on for warm wholesome meals, fellowship and recreation and a way to support the maintenance of an independent life style.

Twenty-seven years ago, using a \$25,000 budget provided by a "model grant," Winston Bledsoe started the first agency in Southwest Missouri to organize and open senior centers. The Southwest Missouri Office on Aging grew out of that effort and opened nine senior centers in six weeks in 1973.

Today, the agency that Bledsoe helped create provides services and a daily meeting place for more than 40,000 seniors a year. The Southwest Missouri Office on Aging has 38 centers and a budget of more than \$6.8 million providing individual social services, transportation, meals, recreation and home-maker care. Bledsoe encouraged seniors at each center to own their own building, thereby reducing the government's role in the future of the facilities in case federal aid was ever curbed or interrupted.

Dorothy Knowles, who was Bledsoe's chief lieutenant over the last quarter century and the new agency director, calls Winston a visionary, who was "dedicated to the lowest cost of keeping older people independent." For most people, quality of life is defined by their degree of independence.

Bledsoe has been a tireless advocate for seniors and group who serve them. He has often battled bureaucrats, politicians, and local opponents. He has not always been diplomatic but he has never forgotten who he serves. The interest of older Southwest Missourians are always foremost in his efforts.

Winston, at age 70, retired as the director of the agency this year. A former insurance salesman and football coach, his third career will leave a legacy cherished by every senior in Southwest Missouri who finds friends, support and nourishing meals at one of the centers that Bledsoe nurtured.

#### WILLARD MUNGER, MINNESOTA'S ENVIRONMENTAL ICON

#### HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 13, 1999*

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, July 11, Minnesota lost our most senior, longest serving, best loved friend, mentor and state representative, Willard Munger at the age of 88.

After forty-eight years of public service and a lifetime of fighting for people and the environment, DFLer Willard Munger stands as a testament to public service. Unbending in principle but pragmatic and patient to achieve results, Munger's list of achievements are too numerous to mention. While 88 years of age he was still contemporary in his thinking and open to new ideas and solutions. Many of his policies were ahead of their time, such as packaging laws, water and air pollution.

I was proud to serve in the Minnesota Legislature on Chairman Munger's revered Environment and Natural Resources Committee. I was an eager student and to this day, twenty-

nine years later, both the lessons I have learned and the Munger spirit and excitement guide me in my Congressional work. Indeed I, like to many others, stand on the shoulders and work of one very special Minnesotan environmentalist, Willard Munger.

We can all see further because of his work and the benchmarks Munger has set in Minnesota. We should try to employ his vision and lessons as we work for future generations in the preservation, conservation and restoration of the natural world.

The following are two editorials from the July 13th St. Paul and Minneapolis papers which give testimony to the work and life of Willard Munger, who is being laid to rest today.

[From the St. Paul Pioneer Press, July 13, 1999]

#### MORE THAN A POLITICIAN

Willard Munger campaigned for Floyd B. Olson, first ran for office under the banner of the old Farmer-Labor Party and won his first election when Dwight Eisenhower was president. At age 88, Munger was the oldest legislator in Minnesota history and its longest serving House member—with 48 years of service.

But Munger, who died early Sunday in Duluth, will be remembered for more than his phenomenal political longevity.

Long known as "Mr. Environment," Munger left his mark as the father of the state Environmental Trust Fund and an architect of virtually every major piece of environmental legislation enacted in the last three decades.

While he was not the Legislature's most gifted orator, the motel owner from west Duluth had a way of getting people's attention and getting things done. Munger's environmental activism began in earnest in 1971, when he passed a bill to create the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District and begin the cleanup of the heavily polluted St. Louis River.

Two years later, after the DFL captured control of both houses of the Legislature, Munger took over as chairman of the House Environment Committee and helped enact dozens of major environmental laws. They included legislation to protect wild and scenic rivers, promote recycling and reduce solid waste, clean up polluted lands, safeguard groundwater supplies and preserve wetlands.

But Munger's greatest achievement was the passage of a state constitutional amendment in 1988 that created the Environmental Trust Fund, and earmarked 40 percent of state lottery proceeds for this purpose. Since its creation, the fund has generated more than \$100 million for parks and trails, fish and wildlife habitat, and environmental education.

Willard Munger truly left this state and Earth a better place than he found it.

[Minneapolis Star Tribune, July 13, 1999]

(Willard Munger)

#### MINNESOTA'S ENVIRONMENTAL VISIONARY

There is talk about the best way to memorialize Willard Munger and his four decades in the Minnesota House, perhaps by renaming the Environmental Trust Fund for him. Not a bad move, but possibly a superfluous one.

"This state abounds with monuments to Munger's tireless advocacy of the natural world, from clean rivers to bicycle trails to metropolitan wetlands to northwoods wilder-

ness preserves. Many a Minnesotan needs no plaque to know that "Mr. Environment," who died on Sunday at age 88, is the man to thank for these.

Munger was already in his second decade of legislative service when the modern environmental movement began in the early 1970s. His political experience, informed by the passions he acquired from a naturalist grandfather and populist father, positioned him as both visionary and strategist of the new ideals.

One of his proudest victories was among the first: the \$115 million cleanup that transformed the St. Louis River from an industrial drainage into one of the state's loveliest streams. Munger built his last home along the river and hosted an annual canoe trip and barbecue for friends and colleagues; the tenth of these would have been held last month but his illness forced postponement.

Munger loved politics of the old-fashioned sort, stubbornly advancing his cause with a combination of persuasion, patience and shrewd deal-making. He was not notably charismatic; journalists ranked him among the legislature's worst-dressed members and marveled at his mumbling, fumbling style of address on the House floor. But he excelled at one-to-one negotiation and played a masterful role in conference committees, where his passion could win the day for his position.

He was deeply respected by colleagues, if not particularly beloved. Northern legislators were regularly aggrieved by his advocacy for public lands and lakeshores, for wetland protection, for halting Reserve Mining Co.'s discharge of tailings into Lake Superior. But they could count on him to support spending that would bring employment and tourism to their districts. Some, perhaps, began to see the correctness of his views that more jobs are created than destroyed through environmental progress.

In recent years, as the tide turned on environmental concerns, Munger fought to save his earlier achievements from dismantling. But his file drawers were said to contain plenty of new initiatives, too, awaiting the right moment for introduction. Now they form another Munger legacy, awaiting a new champion to take up the task.

#### TRIBUTE TO JERRY SNYDER

#### HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 13, 1999*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to former Chisholm High School bank conductor, Jerry Snyder.

Jerry Snyder was borne in Duluth and graduated from Duluth East High School. As a child, Jerry learned to play the piano and went on to learn how to play the tuba, baritone horn, and trombone. He graduated from the University of Minnesota—Duluth. A few years later began his career as a conductor at Chisholm High School. Jerry began his conducting career 30 years ago when he became the band conductor in Chisholm. In addition to directing the Chisholm High School Band, he also conducted two area church choirs, St. Joseph's Catholic Church and St. Leo's Catholic Church.

Jerry has continued his personal interest in and enthusiasm for music through the years.